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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, October 9, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Mixed Grills for Quick Meals." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Cooking Beef According to the Cut", "Lamb as You Like It", "Cooking Cured Pork", and "Pork in Preferred Ways".

---ooOoo---

There comes a day every now and then in the lives of all of us when we want to serve a quick dinner and a tempting one. Maybe we're coming home late in the afternoon and bringing a guest with us who would appreciate something original and attractive in the food line.

For such occasions a mixed grill fills the bill -- a one-dish meal cooked all together in the broiler. Oh, my! I almost missed a fine bit of original and spontaneous poetry. A mixed grill to fill the bill. Did you say Longfellow or Tennyson? Well, there's really no telling what I might have done in the poetry line if I hadn't started in this radio work. But now I'm afraid it's too late to do much about it. Those tender years when I might have been writing sonnets on bluebells in the spring/and lyrics on bird songs at dawn or ---

Somebody stop me. It's much more cheerful to talk about preparing a grilled dinner than to let my mind dwell on what I might have been.

As I was saying, a grilled meal all prepared in the broiling pan under the direct heat is an easy, quick and handy kind of a meal for a cozy, informal dinner for a few people. The number you can serve depends, of course, on the size of your stove and broiler and the amount of food you can get in it. Broiling is an especially popular method of cooking these days when so many modern ranges are equipped with convenient broilers --- pans that slip under the flame or heating element and are fitted with a rack to hold the food.

Perhaps I'd better stop a minute and go back to the beginning. I'll start out this time with a definition to make the way clearer. Exactly what is this method "broiling?" Broiling, say the specialists, is cooking food either over or under direct heat.

And what is grilling? Just another word for broiling. Strictly speaking, all foods for a mixed grilled dinner should be broiled.

Broiling or grilling is an especially delicious way to cook tender cuts of meat. The high heat applied directly to the surface of the meat at the beginning keeps in the juices and the flavor of the steaks or chops. In the old days meat was grilled over or in front of an open fire. Today we place it on a broiler or in broiling pans under an electric or gas burner. The meat is usually turned from side to side until the outside is seared and before any juices escape. Then the heat is reduced and the meat cooked through.

So much for definitions and explanations. To make a long story short, you can prepare a grill dinner fit for royalty in from 10 to 20 minutes. Speed and fine flavor both, if you choose the right foods for your menu.

And the right foods are those that can be quickly cooked, that provide a balanced ration, and that go well together. A grilled meal, like any other successful meal, needs variety in texture, flavor and color.

The meat chosen should be cuts that can be cooked quickly -- tender cuts or bacon or pre-cooked meats. And the same holds true for the vegetables, or other foods in the grill. Vegetables used must either be of a variety that will cook rapidly or they must be cooked ahead of time. (Grilling is a good way to use up left-over cooked vegetables) Vegetables like white and sweet potatoes, carrots or turnips, should always be baked or boiled before grilling. But vegetables that will cook rapidly like mushrooms, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and eggplant, can go into the broiling pan raw.

The only utensil you need for grilling is a large square baking pan or the pan provided for the broiler. In it go all the foods to be grilled. To be cooked side by side. Then individual plates will be arranged with a serving of each different food.

The dinner plates should be hot and the food transferred directly from the grilling pan to the plates and arranged attractively. When planning the meal, be sure to provide enough of each food to serve each person at least once.

Serving the dinner this way, you see, makes the meal very easy and saves work not only in cooking and serving but also on dish washing. So such a dinner is a time saver from first to last.

Now about the process of grilling. Have the heat turned on in the broiler ahead of time or have the coals ready and glowing when you put the pan of food underneath to be cooked. The simplest, easiest menu of this sort is planned with several foods that all take about the same length of time to broil. If, however, you should want to broil a thick steak and tomato slices for the same meal, the steaks should go under the heat first and the tomatoes should be set in when the steak is partly done.

The Menu Specialist has planned four simple mixed grill menus for today. Uncle Ebenezer has read them over and declares that they are exactly the kind of meal that any man likes. So there's just one more advantage to broiled meals. They're quick, they're easy, they're tasty and men like them. If you want a more elaborate menu, salad may be served along with the grill and a nice dessert afterward. Salad is an especially good accompaniment because it gives the green crisp food that would otherwise be lacking. With the exception of peppers, green vegetables are not successful cooked in this way.

Now if you have your pencils ready, I'll give you Grill Number One. For this meal you will place in your broiler pan some nice flat beef cakes or individual steaks cut thin; Tomatoes in halves seasoned with pepper and salt; Banana with a little butter, lemon juice and powdered sugar brushed over them. These three foods make up the mixed grill plate -- a complete first course, you see, having meat, tomatoes to give color and tart flavor, and bananas to supply starch and the bit of sweetness this combination needs. Add to this a green salad and a dessert and your meal is ready to satisfy the hungriest and the most fastidious person.

Grill Number Two: Individual link sausage or sausage cakes; Browned sweet potatoes; and Apple rings. The potatoes, of course, must be cooked in advance. Boiled or baked potatoes left from another meal will be just the thing. Skin them, cut them in half, spread them with melted butter or other fat, sprinkle them with salt and arrange them in the grill pan. Next there are the apple rings to fix. They are nicest if they are made from firm tart apples. Wash and core the apples but don't pare them. Cut them in rings or slices about 1/4 inch thick, brush them over with fat and sprinkle with sugar. Then set them in the pan beside the sweet potatoes. Arrange the sausage beside them and, about twenty minutes before mealtime, slide the pan into the broiling oven. Broil not too close to the heat for fifteen minutes, turning the food from side to side so that it becomes thoroughly done and browns on both sides but does not burn. Baste once or twice with the juice in the pan.

All ready now for Grill Number Three, a ham grill. Cured ham cut in serving pieces; Pepper stuffed with rice and cheese; Broiled canned pineapple slices.

Grill Number Four features lamb chops. And, by the way, when you order those chops be sure to ask the butcher for the single, rather than the thick double ones. Chops that are too thick are difficult to cook through to the center in a short time. Lamb chops; Broiled mushrooms on toast, and Broiled canned peaches.

First place the chops in the pan so that they will be directly under the flame or burner. Sear them on both sides, allowing about five minutes for each side. Then remove the grill pan from the oven and set halves of large canned peaches, pit side up, beside the chops. Pour a small quantity of melted butter over the peaches and add a very tiny bit of salt. Next to the peaches go the mushroom heads or caps, gill side down. (The mushrooms have already been washed and skinned and the stems have been cut off.) Now slip the pan back under the flame, broil 2 or 3 minutes more, and then turn the mushroom caps over, sprinkle them with salt and pepper, and place a small piece of butter in each cup. Broil under the flame until the chops are brown and juicy and cooked to the center, the peaches heated through and brown on top, the mushrooms browned and softened. When you lift the mushrooms out on the plates, be careful not to lose the juice in each little cup. Serve them on buttered toast.

Monday: "Some Animal Enemies."